

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, 27th January, 2026

At the extraordinary meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held in the Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 27th January, 2026

Present: His Worship the Mayor (Councillor C Brown), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor K B Tanner), Cllr L Athwal, Cllr B Banks, Cllr K Barton, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr A G Bennison, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr L Chapman, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr Mrs T Dean, Cllr D Harman, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr D Keers, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr A McDermott, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr D W King, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr R W G Oliver, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr S Pilgrim, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr D Thornewell, Cllr K S Tunstall and Cllr C J Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Boxall, G C Bridge, J Clokey*, M A Coffin*, A Cope, S Crisp*, S M Hammond and F A Hoskins*

(apologies for in-person attendance, participated via MS Teams)

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 26/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

MATTERS FOR DECISION

C 26/2 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

In order to facilitate the proper consideration of the following planning application and in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the Mayor proposed that the Council should suspend its own procedure rules and resolve itself into a committee to which rules relating to a planning committee were applied. This was seconded by Cllr Tanner (Deputy Mayor) and Council

RESOLVED: That Council Procedure Rules should be suspended and the Council resolve itself into a committee to which rules relating to a planning committee were applied.

C 26/3 PLANNING APPLICATION TM/25/01938/PA - BLUEBELL HILL, COMMUTER CAR PARK, CHATHAM

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services which sought planning permission for the erection of a three-storey residential building comprising 12 two-bedroom units to be used as temporary housing accommodation.

The proposal would help address the increasing demand for temporary accommodation which the authority had a statutory duty to provide.

Due regard was given to the principle of development, national and local planning policies, the visual impact, design and layout, residential amenity, highways and parking, ecology and trees and a number of other factors detailed in the report. The views of consultees were also taken into account. Members attention was drawn to an amended Condition 3 as detailed in the supplementary report which corrected the terms in respect of operational arrangements.

As the application did not propose permanent residential accommodation, Kent County Council was not seeking its regular developer contributions towards education, community services and adult social care. Similarly, it was not appropriate to seek open space or NHS contributions.

Concerns regarding the intended occupants of the temporary accommodation were addressed and it was clarified that this was strictly for local residents made homeless at short notice. Members were reassured that risk assessments to determine suitability would be undertaken before accommodation was allocated and that site management would be in place to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour.

In addition, Members sought clarification on accessing local facilities without transport, drainage, water and sewerage infrastructure. In response, it was confirmed that a shared walking and cycleway provided access to facilities, and that the site shared mains water and sewage connections with the neighbouring dental practice.

Overall, it was concluded that there would be no adverse impacts of granting planning permission that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits that the development would bring when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole. In addition, the development would deliver 12 high-quality units of accommodation on previously developed land, directly intended to

address the Borough Council's statutory duties under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

In recognition of the severe and growing shortage of suitable temporary accommodation and with demand consistently exceeding the supply within the borough, Cllr Davis proposed, Cllr Dalton seconded and Council

RESOLVED: That planning permission be granted in accordance with the submitted details, conditions, reasons and informatives set out in the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services, subject to:

(1) Amended Condition 3:

The development hereby approved shall only be used as temporary residential accommodation with occupation of each individual unit limited to households to whom the Council owe homelessness duties under the Housing Act 1996, and for no other purpose within Class C3 of Part C of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (or any equivalent class in any order that may replace it).

Reason: Any change to permanent residential occupation may result in the requirement for appropriate developer contributions to be sought.

[Speakers: Representative of Zed Pods]

C 26/4 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED: That authority be given for the Common Seal of the Council to be affixed to any instrument to give effect to a decision of the Council incorporated into these Minutes and proceedings.

The meeting ended at 7.58 pm